



Rekado ng Kwento:

The Culinary Heritage Significance of Lomi in Lipa City, Batangas, Philippines

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Abstract

Rekado ng Kwento is a Tagalog phrase that has two words, Rekado (Ingredient) and Kwento (Story), which translates as “Ingredient of the Story”. This is a figurative phrase that describes the importance of the research paper. The “story” concentrates on the significance of the heritage resource while the word “ingredient” signifies food and its content. The paper explicates the story of one of the culinary heritage resources of the city of Lipa, which is lomi. Lomi is a thick soup that is a mixture of egg noodles, vegetable and different kinds of meat toppings such as kikiam, pork, chicken, beef, liver, shrimp and squid. The theoretical frameworks used for the research are the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, and the Getty Conservation Institute’s (GCI) Planning Process Methodology. As a qualitative research, the findings are based on the physical evidence observation through culinary heritage mapping, oral evidence through in-depth interviews with the owners and representatives of the lomians (lomi houses) and documentary / archival evidences. Findings show that lomi, as a culinary tradition of the city, is significant in its historical, culinary, aesthetic, economic, social and symbolical aspects. The over-all findings could be used for providing sustainable programs and projects that will promote the balance between safeguarding the culinary tradition and development as a culinary heritage tourism and business resource.

Keywords

lomi, culinary heritage, Lipa City, Batangas, Philippines

1 Introduction

Rekado ng Kwento is a Tagalog phrase that has two important words, rekado (ingredient) and kwento (story), which translates as “Ingredient of the Story”. This is a figurative phrase that describes the importance of the research paper. The “story” concentrates on the significance of the heritage resource; while, the word “ingredient” signifies food and the content of the food. The

paper explicates the story of lomi, as one of the culinary heritage resources of the city of Lipa. Lomi, a Chinese-inspired noodle, is one of the trademarks of Lipa City used for generating profits by the local community and is being offered to locals and non-locals (Polistico, 2016). The current study aims to explain the different culinary heritage significance of lomi specifically on its historical, culinary, aesthetic, economic, social and symbolical aspects based on physical, oral and documentary evidences. The researchers would want to conceptualize a basis for culinary sustainable development specifically concentrating on safeguarding and development through different programs and projects. It also highlights that before conceptualization and the implementation of culinary programs and projects concentrating on safeguarding and development, researchers and planners must determine the significance of the culinary resource that may affect the expected output and the potential effects of it in different aspects of the community.

Lipa City lomi is one of the culinary identities of the city and its community. According to the Office of the City Planning and Development of Lipa, Batangas, lomi is considered as one of the culinary and cultural icons of the city. (Local Government of Lipa City, 2018). With this, the city promotes it as one of their tourism resources especially as one of the Lipa culinary identities. That is why there are different lomi houses or restaurants offering lomi in different parts of the city. This is also recognized by the provincial government of Batangas specifically by the provincial tourism and cultural affairs office (Provincial Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office, 2017).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), the Australia International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter for Places of Cultural Significance and the Getty Conservation Institute's (GCI) Planning Process Methodology are all the theoretical frameworks used in the study. These frameworks share a common ground wherein they emphasize the importance of documentation and inventory of different intangible cultural heritage and to determine different heritage significance as a basis for conceptualizing and implementing programs and projects for safeguarding and development. A conceptual framework is even formulated to analyze the significance of the culinary tradition that will be the basis for different plans and programs. The researchers focused as well on the importance and involvement of the different stakeholders, as it is a driving tool for sustainable development. Sustainable development, for heritage properties, balances the importance of safeguarding (heritage identity of the local community) and development (resource for modernization). For the research paper, it focused on three steps. The first step is identification and elaboration, which determines the culinary tradition of lomi by means of the ICH inventory and documentation or cultural heritage mapping and the tourism activity assessment. ICH inventory and documentation will determine the culinary tradition and its details. The second step is to discuss the significance based on different aspects, generally on the socio-cultural and economic. From the details regarding the significances, a summarized statement must be formulated. This statement will be the basis for any conservation and development plans and projects for the culinary tradition.

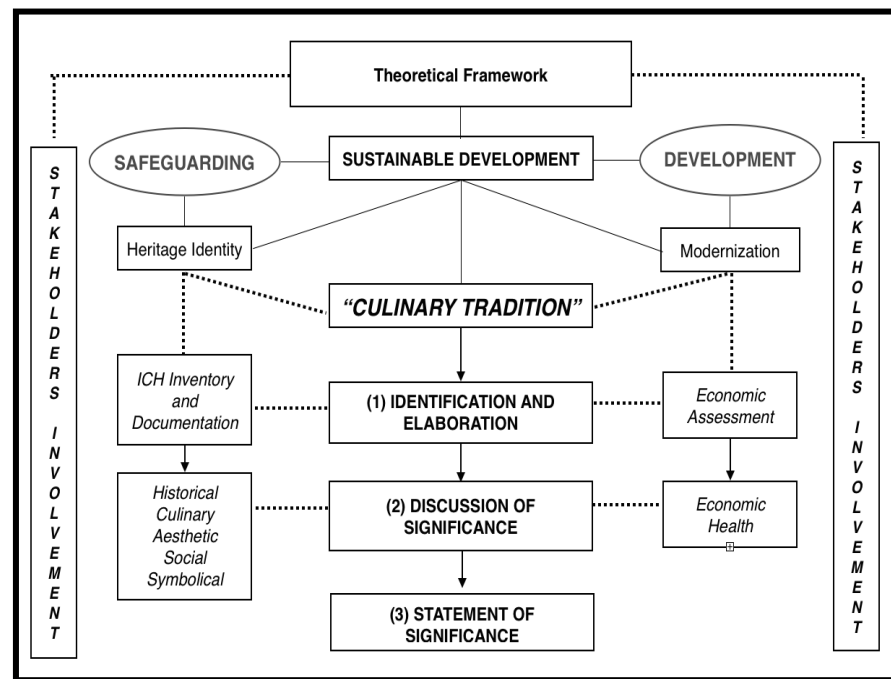


Figure 1. The Culinary Heritage Significance Conceptual Framework

2 Literature Review

Pamana (Heritage): Heritage of the Community

People normally recognize culture and heritage as the same with regard to its definition and significance to the community. However, based on theoretical and conceptual researches and studies from the academic field, these two are different but related to each other. There are definitions of heritage according to different researchers (Edson, 2004; Roland, 2013; Devallon, 2013; Bessiere, 2013) and from international and Philippine-based organizations (National Economic Development Authority, 2017). In fact, there are various researchers and academicians have also identified and presented their definitions and explanations (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963; Barnouw, 1973; Rajchman, 1995; Nasaa-art, 2004). It should be noted that the most valuable and universally approved definition of heritage comes from the UNESCO. According to the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, culture is “a way of living that includes behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of human work and thought shared that reflect the identity of a group” (UNESCO, 2002). On the other hand, according to UNESCO World Heritage Centre, heritage is “a legacy from the past, what people live with today, and what an individually or group of people collectively pass on to future generations” (UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS & IUCN, 2013). The word legacy from the definition pertains to what a particular person or community inherits from other persons or from other communities; or adapted from one race to another. Bessiere (2013) reiterated that “it must be continuously

transferred from one generation to another generation” (p. 284). He further added that “as a person or the community continuously practices it, it becomes their identity or represents and characterizes them” (p. 286).

Cultural Expressions: Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in an International and National Setting

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is considered as an identity and the story of the community (UNESCO, 2003). This translates to what and how the community expresses their tradition, customs and beliefs, which then becomes an ordinary practice or lifestyle. An individual or a community transmits these heritages from one generation to another orally or by gesture. The transmission of intangible heritage is an indication of giving respect and honor to the cultural significances and human creativity of the community (UNESCO, 2003). At some point, when intangible heritages are transmitted, an individual or the community changes some of the details. The heritage is modified based on how people understand its significance, the complexity of the heritage practice, availability of the needed materials and other related things; the human creativity and skills development; the documentation of the heritage and the influence of modern information and technology.

The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is to ensure international recognition from the different member states and to guarantee a ratification of their own national legislation regarding the contents of the convention. The 2003 Convention aims at safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage that is in step with international agreements on human rights and that meets requirements of mutual respect among communities and of sustainable development (UNESCO 2003).

UNESCO 2003 Convention identified five domains of the ICH. Domains are considered as the classifications of ICH based on what an ICH highlights and its identity to the community. Each ICH can be classified as one or more than one domains. The domains of the ICH are as follows (UNESCO, 2003):

- Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- Performing arts;
- Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and
- Traditional craftsmanship

On the part of the Philippines, a law was ratified and amended under the Philippine Constitution that represents as the government's reply from the amended UNESCO 2003 Convention, the Republic Act No. 10066 or also known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009. This law focuses on the “conservation and promotion of the nation's cultural heritage; to completely establish the National Commission for Culture and the Arts; and to protect the welfare of the cultural workers in the country” (Congress of the Philippines, 2009). Under the law, the

government protects the significance and value of ICH by creating the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage specifically the Philippine Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee in collaboration with the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM) (Art. 5 Sec. 19). The government is responsible for documenting the ICH of the Philippines and to secure that it is continuously practiced and interpreted properly by the community. This also assures proper information dissemination of ICH to the community by all means such as integration in the curricula from the basic education to the postgraduate studies; and tourism.

Kahalagahan (Significance): Statement of Heritage Significance

Significance, according to LeBlanc (1993) pertains to “the importance, relevance and meaning of a heritage resource to an individual or a group of people” (p. 3). This will make a heritage resource distinct from other heritage resources. It discusses why it is important in certain aspects and why the community must conserve it for future use. There are numerous frameworks that determine the significance of a heritage resource based on international conventions and charters. Some of the well-known frameworks are the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter of Places of Cultural Significance (Australia ICOMOS, 1999) and Assessing the Value of the Cultural Heritage (Getty Conservation Institute, 2002).

The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter of Places of Cultural Significance is an Australia based charter ratified by the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Australia that determines the significance of the heritage from the different evidences available specifically coming from the physical, oral and archival or documentary. At the end of the process, a statement of significance will be created that will be considered as the foundation of all developments and projects to be implemented.

Another framework comes from the GCI based on the March 2000 group discussion of the different specialists in conservation. In the report, discussions related on heritage value and significance were included especially highlighting on the significance of heritage in the economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects. The report also included different frameworks on how to determine the significance of a heritage resource. One of the frameworks was on the Planning Process Methodology by Randall Mason. In the framework, researchers must first identify and describe the heritage resource being studied; then, the assessment and analysis will be done by studying the physical conditions, cultural significance setting and the management context (Getty Conservation Institute, 2002). The last part of the framework is the response or identification of certain plans and projects to be implemented.

Kulinarya (Culinary): Heritage from the Sense of Taste

Culinary tradition is an essential identity of the community (Reynolds, 1993; Lucin, 2013; Council on International Education Exchange, n.d.; Westering, 1999; Di Mauro, Vanni, Trampetti, Raschi, &

Cinelli-Colombini, 2011). It is because all aspects that describe food are connected to the historical, anthropological and cultural dimensions of the community (Visser, 1991). These aspects are related to the reason why the community prepares the food, the significance of food, the raw ingredients and materials used (tangible); the process of cooking, preparation and presentation; and how it is transmitted from generation to generation (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). It all started from why it is being prepared and why food is important socio-culturally. Like the common belief of the Filipinos that cooking and preparing noodles during birthdays will give a person long life or preparing sticky kakanins (traditional rice cakes) will bind family ties and friendship. It also explained how it started and how it affects the history of the community. For instance, hunting and eating tugak (Kapampangan term for frogs) started during the pre-Hispanic period. This is when farmers are dependent on water irrigation. Their children would catch the frogs around the field; while, their parents are planting (Borromeo, 2014). These means that every food has a story that contributes or is connected to the identity of the community.

It is also important to know how raw materials are produced and gathered (Alejandro, 1998). Agricultural, fishing and husbandry are common industries of the community that produces raw materials such as rice, grains, vegetables, fruits, animal meats and the like. These are part of the community's everyday lifestyle and considered to be their culture. When people cook Suman (rice cake), they need rice; for Menudo (pork cubes stew), a person needs pork meat; for Rellenong Bangus (stuffed milk fish), a person needs milkfish from the ponds. It is significant for us to know how rice is gathered and the process in which it is cultivated; on how fishermen catch a large amount of fish just to help his family; or how the butcher kills the pigs and cuts every part of it. Culinary identity also describes where the ingredients come from and the process involved in how they are gathered.

It is also important to study the materials being used for cooking. When Filipinos cook Sinigang (sour-based soup), traditionally, people tend to use a palayok (clay pot), which is handmade and has undergone a traditional process. Another example is the Kudkuran (traditional Filipino coconut meat shredder), which is used to shred the meat of a mature coconut to produce coconut cream and the milk. One of the dishes of the Philippines that uses coconut cream and milk is Laing, a Bicol dish made of the stalks and leaves of gabi (taro plant) (Fernandez, 1988)

The use of traditional and local ingredients and materials is an important component in the integrity and identity of the dish (Hornig & Tsai, 2012; Mora, 1998). These ingredients show the integrity of the food and contribute to the conservation and preservation of the culinary tradition. The lolos and lolas (grandfathers and grandmothers) of the family are normally strict in the selection of ingredients and materials; and preferably they want to use the traditional. The traditionalist would say: "Lalabas ang tunay na sarap kung gagamitin ang sariling atin" (True taste of the food can be experienced if we will use the traditional ingredients). For instance, to make the Ilokano empanada, Ilokanos (people from the Ilocos region) use their traditional longganisa (traditional meat sausage). Pangasinenses (people from the provinces of Pangasinan) will use their own grown bangus (milk fish) to cook their grilled fish or pair it with dinengdeng (traditional vegetable stew). Pinangat na gabi of the Bikolanos (people from the Bicol region) use a palayok to make it more traditional.

Food is used in important events that happen to a person or to the community (Alejandro, Reyes, & Santos, 2008; Lee, 2015). For instance, if a person cooks pansit (Filipino noodles) or the Filipino style spaghetti (cooked in tomato sauce), some would think they are celebrating a birthday of a person. Litson (roasted pig) is prepared for very special occasions such as piesta (fiesta). When people smell the traditional kakanins of puto bibingka and puto bumbong with hot tsokolate (hot chocolate) or tanglad (lemon grass) tea; it means that Christmas season started. Even for unusual events, people, especially in the Philippines, have their own food to match the occasion. In a lamay (dead's wake), people prepare biscuits, kape (hot coffee), roasted nuts, different kinds of chichiría (junk foods) for the guests. In some provinces, people prefer to serve traditional kakanins like sinukmani or puto. People can recognize a sabongero (person who joins a cockfight) who loses a fight if he serves Chicken talunan to his family. The dish is a soy stew with salted bean cakes herbed with oregano, clove, star anise and cinnamon stick. The star of the dish is the chicken that suffers a loss in the fight. It can also be mixed with pata (pig's feet).

Lomi: The Hot Noodle Soup of Batangas

Lomi is considered as a foreign influenced dish, specifically coming from the Fujian cuisine that is completely embraced by the Batangueños especially in Lipa. Lomi is a thick egg noodle soup that is a mixture of egg noodles, vegetable and different kinds of meat toppings such as kikiam, pork, chicken, beef, liver, shrimp and squid. The soup base is a meat stock that is a combination of pork belly and/or whole chicken (Palanca, Oshima, & de Guzman, 2015). In Fujian cuisine, Lo Mi is a breakfast dish that most of the heads of the family requests (Palanca et al., 2015). In Batangas, lomi does not have any vegetables. It has only meat, noodles and the thick stock or the gravy. Another unique characteristic of lomi in Batangas is that it has a dipping sauce (sawsawan), which is a mixture of soy sauce, calamansi juice and chopped red onions; and sometimes with bird's eye chili (siling labuyo) depending on the preference of the person eating it. This sawsawan is not mixed automatically into lomi but it must be mixed in a separate saucer. As a person eats the lomi, they put a little of the sawsawan in one part of the soup; then mixes it and gets the part where there is the sawsawan.

Lomi also has its food partner just like puto-dinuguan (rice cake and pork blood stew) and; tuyo and champorado (dried fish with chocolate rice porridge). For lomi, the best partner for it is pan de agua (bread of water) sold in Cuenca, Batangas according to Uy and Orillos (2015).

Lomian (lomi place) is present in most of the municipalities and cities of Batangas especially in San Jose, Ibaan, Rosario, Batangas City and Cuenca; and of course in Lipa City, known to be the home of the first lomi. Panciteria de Lipa, established in 1968, is considered as the first lomian in Lipa and in Batangas which introduced lomi to the community. A pure Chinese and the owner, To Kim Eng, at first, cooked lomi for his mahjong friends as merienda (snack) (Tayag & Quioc, 2012). It was only when Kim Eng and his wife noticed that there were a number of people requesting for

lomi that they decided to establish a restaurant and set up some tables and chairs outside their house. As the number of customers increased, the couple decided to build a restaurant at Kapitan Simeon Luz Street near the public market (Tayag & Quioc, 2012).

One might ask as to how the culture of lomi spread all over Batangas. Kim Eng, the owner of Pansiteria de Lipa, talked about every single detail of the process of cooking it to interested people. His philosophy for this is that he wants to help other people. He would always say that: “It is good to share the know-how of cooking lomi so that others may have a source of income as well” (Tayag & Quioc, 2012). To continue the tradition of his family, the process was also shared with their siblings and grandchildren.



Figure 2. The original Lomi from To Kim Eng's Pansiteria de Lipa together with its traditional sawsawan (sauce) (Source: Mercado, 2016)

3 Methods

As seen in Table 1, this research is a qualitative-narrative type which is “designed to reveal a target audience’s range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues” (Qualitative Research Consultants Association, 2017).

The findings were also based on three major evidences for determining heritage significance: physical, oral and documentary/archival (Australia ICOMOS, 2013). Physical evidence is the examination of the subject heritage resource specifically by observation through implementing the cultural heritage mapping (CHM). CHM is the process of identifying natural and cultural heritage resources of a specific locality for the purpose of conservation and development (Commonwealth Department of Communication and the Arts, 1995). For CHM, there are available templates (Zerrudo, 2008) that can be used for a specific cultural and heritage resource. For this study, the researchers used the Intangible Cultural Heritage template to determine a comprehensive detail of lomi for every lomian. These details pertain to the raw ingredients and the environment; sources of

the raw ingredients, materials and supplies; and the the cooking method. The mapping's geographical scope was the Urban District or Barangay Poblacion 1 to 11 (including 9-A) of the city of Lipa.

Table 1. Tabular representation of the research method used

Research Design	Research Method	Research Evidences	Research Instrument	Associated Theoretical Framework
Qualitative Research	Narrative Method	Physical	Observation using the Cultural Heritage Mapping	Cultural Heritage Mapping Template – UST Format
		Oral	In-depth Interview	Questionnaire
		Documentary	Archival Documentation	UNESCO 2003 Convention, Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter and the GCI Planning Process Methodology

The oral evidence determined factual and insights from the different stakeholders, specifically the owners and representatives of the lomians. With this, an in-depth interview was implemented. In-depth interview is a qualitative type of research that seeks to determine a comprehensive insight from a person with the condition of having only a small group of respondents (Boyce & Neale, 2006). For the research, the in-depth interview identified the different variations of lomi offered in an establishment, the transmission of the culinary tradition, raw ingredient generation, economic valuation, changes implemented and its associated reasons and effects, and the promotional programs of the stakeholders.

As part of any heritage and cultural research, tedious archival and documentary works were required. All published articles were from reputable and ISI-indexed journals while all published books and other related references were focused on culinary heritage, culinary tourism and community identity.

As for the cultural heritage mapping, lomi from different lomians will be the main test materials for the research. Lomi would be purchased from each lomian. Other associated food or condiments for lomi will be considered as test materials but must support the total or a part of the significance of the dish.

As the research dealt with private ownership especially in the recipe and process of cooking and perspectives of the people that would be used for the in-depth interviews, the researchers gave the assurance that (1) the researchers would release all communication letters including the template and questions to be asked to respective offices/people before conducting any research; (2) after releasing the letters, the researchers would only include as subjects those who would accept the invitation to participate; (3) instructions would be given beforehand; (4) any person or group of people, including the researchers, would not control the answer to any question; and (5)

the results of the study would be strictly confidential. Each subject was given a copy of the results for validation.

As regards to the discussion of heritage significance, different significant aspects specifically in the historical (story of the culinary resource), culinary (attachment of the food to the everyday lifestyle of the community and other people associated), aesthetic (physical consistency and appearance of the dish especially related to the way on how raw ingredients are combined and on how the dish is being plated in the desired serving utensils), economic (positive effects of the culinary tradition in the growth of the city for uplifting the lives of the community and contributing to the total production of goods and services offered), social (local community's perspective about the culinary tradition as it is part of their everyday lifestyle) and symbolical (culinary tradition is being interpreted as part of the local community's morals, values and ethical practices) were all determined.

4 Findings

The framework was divided into three steps: identification and elaboration; discussion of significance and the conceptualization of the statement of significance. These steps contributed in determining the different heritage significance of Lipa City lomi specifically on its historical, culinary, aesthetic, economic, social and symbolical aspects. The identification and elaboration phase implemented the CHM and the associated methods such as the in-depth interview to gather information needed to strengthen the statement of significance. The second phase highlighted the analysis of the gathered information and grouped it based on its culinary heritage significance aspects. Figure 3 provides that details of the aspects. The last phase of the research project was on the conceptualization of the statement of significance otherwise known as summarized statement that explained the heritage significance identified in the research.



Figure 3. Culinary Heritage Significance Aspects

Discussion of Heritage Significance

Historical Significance

What started as a free snack, to sharing of the recipe, to establishing lomi houses, lomi is now celebrating its fiftieth anniversary as an industry in Lipa City. The historical significance of lomi to Lipa City, in the province of Batangas could be established by tracing its humble beginnings and noting its development through time.

From the Pre-Hispanic era of the Philippines, there were certain studies about the strong relationship between the Filipinos and the Chinese (Fernando, 1976; Fernandez, 2000; Villegas, 2000; Sta. Maria, 2006; Palanca et al., 2015). Even though time had passed, there were still evidences of this strong relationship between the two groups. Different cultures and traditions were shared and acculturated in their own practices; and one of this is the culinary tradition that mostly came from the Fujian cuisine (Fernando, 1976; Fernandez, 2000; Villegas, 2000; Sta. Maria, 2006; Palanca et al., 2015).

Kim Eng, a native from Amoy, China (known today as Xiamen), traveled to the Philippines to search for new opportunities in order to get a better job and earn money (Tayag & Quioic, 2012). He first stayed in Manila and worked in a mechanical shop but because of some problems he decided to stay with his relatives in Lipa. He met his wife, Nathalia, there, who was really a native of Pangasinan. Their parents got them married and they were blessed with six children. At their house in Poblacion, their friends and relatives were always welcomed to play mahjong, a traditional Chinese game, which uses cubes with different Chinese characters. Kim Eng, as most people call him, started to cook a thick noodle soup for their friends and relatives who were at their house. People appreciated the taste of his food. From this, many people requested for the noodle soup; thus urging them to open their garage for people who wanted to eat. They started with two sets of tables and chairs; and an open kitchen so that people could see how the noodle soup was cooked. Kim Eng freely shared the noodle soup recipe with other people because they wanted to help the community to generate their own income. It was in 1968 when they opened Panciteria de Lipa or Lipa City Panciteria, known as the first lomi house in the city (Tayag & Quioic, 2012). Today, aside from Panciteria de Lipa, there are several lomi houses that are well-known in the city, such as Etring's Restaurant, Lomian sa Palengke, Renfel's Fastfood, Liam's Lomi House, BeeGee's Eatery and Lomi House, and Benok's Fastfood & Lomi House (Local Government of Lipa City, 2018).

Culinary Significance

Lomi is a thick noodle soup made out of sautéing agents such as garlic and onions; animal, seafood, or processed meat; taste and seasoning agents such as soy sauce; miki noodles, pork bones

stock or what they call as caldo, thickening agent specifically cassava starch, egg, toppings, and the sauce.

Lomi shares many similarities with Chinese cuisine, particularly from the Fujian Province, which justifies the claim that the noodle soup is based on the Fujian tradition. Some of these similarities are (1) most Fujian food are soup-based; (2) the use of seafood like shrimp and squid as ingredients; (3) the use of basic cooking methods of boiling and quick-boiling; and, (4) having a bland taste. To remedy the bland taste, the Lipeños chose to add a sauce, which is typically composed of soy sauce, calamansi, bird's eye chili and minced red onion. This is one of the differences of Lipa City lomi compared to the other lomis in the Philippines. Another distinct characteristic of Lipa City lomi is the absence of vegetables as part of the ingredients. At first, vegetables like carrots and pechay baguio were added according to the Chinese tradition; but they decided to remove them upon observing that customers did not eat the vegetables. Aside from the noodle soup's distinct characteristics, Lipa City lomi is also known for different toppings that match to the preference of the people. The community also started by putting-up homemade kikiyam and bola-bola, squid and shrimp, squid ball, pork liver, toasted garlic, spring onions, and sesame oil.

Even though lomi is based on Fujian cuisine, this does not mean that it is not interrelated to the Batangas cuisine tradition. Batangas cuisine is famous for being a straightforward cuisine, which focuses on simple cooking preparation and methods; and taste. Lomi reflects the same concept of being simple; fast in terms of its preparation and cooking; and technically focused on the natural taste of the pork coming from the caldo. It is also important to get the ingredients produced within the city and even in the province. It is a tradition for every lomi house and also for personal consumption that they purchase the ingredients from their public market.

Lipa City lomi is not only known for the meal itself but also the process of cooking in its traditional way as possible. When cooking caldo, they use tungko or a traditional stove, which uses hot coal. The caldo must be cooked in low heat so that it extracts more pork flavor from the bones. This means that it takes a long time for it to be cooked. For the miki noodles, most of the miki factories use halo or a kneading material made from yakal wood to make the noodle dough well incorporated and smooth in texture.

Aesthetic Significance

The plating and the way of eating lomi are also different in other places. Typically, lomi houses offer different sizes of soup bowls with a specific amount and kinds of toppings. From this, it also connects to the affordability of the dish for everyone. The minimum price of a budget size lomi with toppings is PhP 30.00. The highest price for a lomi bowl with toppings, which they call as super lomi, is PhP 120.00. As for the manner of eating it, customers will usually scoop a little amount of lomi, transfer it to a round plate, then mix it with an ample amount of sauce to adjust the taste to their preference.

As lomi is also associated with its food establishment, there are also distinct characteristics when it comes to the arrangement, facility, and menu design. Some lomi houses provided menu boards that are painted in walls, which have different art-related designs.



Figure 3. Photo documentation of the utensils, with identification tags, used for eating lomi (Source: Mercado 2016)

Table 2. Common sizes of the soup bowl and saucer and its measurements*

Kind of Soup Bowl	Measurement (in centimeters)	
	Diameter (d)	Height (h)
Budget	15.1	4.9
Regular	17.5	5.7
Special	20	6.3
Jumbo	23	6.9
Super Jumbo	23.8	9.7
Porcelain Saucer	11.2	2.9
Plastic Saucer	12.2	2.6

* Based from the measurement done by the researcher

Table 3. Common sizes and measurements for other utensils used for lomi

Other Utensils	Measurement (in centimeters)	
	Diameter (d)	Length (L)
Round Plate	19.8	-
Spoon	-	18.5
Fork	-	18.5

Economic Significance

Lomi is not only a tradition that will satisfy one's hunger but also contributes to social development in the city of Lipa. As this culinary tradition was opened for commercial consumption, not only did many people earn from it, it also created several employment

opportunities. The lomi industry creates direct and indirect benefits due to multiplier effect. Another important contribution of the lomi industry is in contributing business-related taxes that could be used by the government for funding different projects and programs for social and economic development.

Social Significance

As a culinary tradition, it must be directly connected to the lifestyle of the local community. Lomi is related to Lipa City's identity, family tradition, and religious perspective. When asked about what food is popular in the city, the local community and people from other areas would always respond "lomi". Today, the local government, through the Lipa City Tourism, Culture and Arts Council, is promoting the culinary tradition of lomi as one of the city's tourism products. Another importance of lomi is about family tradition. Whenever there are celebrations like birthdays and anniversaries, some Lipeños will cook or purchase lomi as part of their feast. In the Chinese tradition, serving a noodle dish like lomi means wishing long life for everyone. Even for regular Saturdays and Sundays after hearing mass, people would purchase or cook lomi to be shared by family members, relatives, and friends. From a religious perspective, everyone could eat lomi even those with religion-based dietary restrictions. In fact, lomi houses are now offering lomi with beef or chicken toppings, with caldo also being beef- or chicken-based.

Symbolic Significance

Lomi is one of the symbolic figures of Chinese influence in the city of Lipa. The dish which is related to Fujian cuisine has been fully accepted by the community until it was made a trademark or identity of Lipa. Thus, a number of locals and foreigners patronize the dish.

The dish also represents the Batangueño culinary tradition, which uses local produce, such as pork and beef, eggs and other poultry products, miki noodles, and cassava starch. This makes the raw ingredients accessible to the users and supports the local produce of the province.

From an acculturated food from the Chinese to being used for social empowerment and development to alleviate poverty, lomi is now a food business product that can create a number of opportunities and changes for investors. A most highlighted effect of this industry for the owners and employees of the lomi houses is the fact that they are able to afford education for their children. They believe that lomi business enables them to provide better life opportunities for their family, especially for their children.

Lomi provides the venue for social interaction, family togetherness, and religious equality. For most people, every weekend is a family day when they get to bond with their family members, relatives and friends. Eating lomi in a lomi house or cooking it in their own home is one way to use their time during those days. With this dish, religious equality is also promoted especially in terms of dietary-based restrictions such as among Muslims and Adventists. Lomi houses are now providing new kinds of lomi not concentrated on pork flavour but in chicken or beef.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, Lipa City lomi is significant on many aspects and a culinary cultural heritage that must be safeguarded and transmitted to future generations. This can be identified from its historical, culinary, aesthetic, economic, social and symbolical context. This will ensure continuity of this culinary tradition and as a source of cultural identity of the city and the community.

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